

Remarks

The following is a response to the Office Action dated December 4, 2003 in which the Examiner has cited Rudolph (US6082360) against claims 1-3, 6 and 10-12.

Per the above amendment, claims 1-4 and 10 have been amended and claims 2 and 12 have been canceled.

The essential difference between the present invention and Rudolph is that the present invention makes use of a flexible, adhesive sheet itself to provide a ventilation device whereas Rudolph uses a flexible adhesive sheet only as means to provide a seal between a separate domed mask and the skin.

It can be seen that the seal sheet 5 of Rudolph has apertures through which the nose and mouth open and that it is only when the mask 4 is adhered to the seal 5 that the nose and mouth are enclosed. Connection to Rudolph's mask is made by a conduit coupling secured to the mask 4, not to the seal sheet 5 itself. See column 4, lines 14-18 and lines 26-28.

Rudolph himself points out in column 1, lines 31 to 36 the advantages of having a mask which conforms to the face and has very little dead space.

The present invention goes a step beyond Rudolph in reducing the dead space and in making the mask highly conformable by making the flexible, adhesive sheet itself the mask, that is, it is the flexible, adhesive sheet that encloses the nose and that supports the connections made to the device.

Claim 1 has been amended to emphasize these differences, for it now specifies that it is the flexible sheet member that extends across the mouth and nose and that the nose is blocked by the flexible, adhesive sheet. Claim 10 now specifies that the

tubular fitting is attached with the flexible adhesive sheet. The amended Claim 1 is, therefore, distinguished from Rudolph because Rudolph does not in any way suggest that the seal 5 itself could extend across the nose and mouth so that the seal itself blocks the nose. Similarly, Claim 10 is clearly distinguished from Rudolph's mask because connection to Rudolph's mask is made by fittings 10 on a component 4 separate from the flexible seal 5.

In light of the foregoing, the examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider this application and pass the same to issue at an early date.

Respectfully submitted,



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